Buddhist Art of Temple No. 1152 at Bagan (Late Bagan Period)

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Abstract

Temple No. 1152 is a kind of small single-storey temple. It is situated at the east of Kyauk-myet-hmow-Zedi-gyi (No. 1158), south of Myinkaba, coordinates– N: 44.265, E: 5.860. Its plan has square central shrine, 2.25 x 2.32 m. Vestibule and porch on north face, Niches on east, south and west foreparts were found. At the exterior of temple, stucco mouldings were found such as ornate cornice and pediments, friezes with triangle, plasters, urn-profiled base, and tasseled friezes with pointed obovals on north forepart. The interior decoration of this small temple consisted of wall paintings or mural paintings. It covered almost entirely the ceiling vaults and all of the interior walls. Temple No. 1152 has full of paintings depicts Buddha life stories. Among the scenes of Buddha’s life, Mara’s army and figures paintings are the most wonderful Buddhist painting of that small temple. According to the art and architectural style of this temple, it was constructed at 13th century A.D, late Bagan period.

Introduction

Temple No. 1152 (Figure 1) is a kind of small single-storey temple. It is situated at the east of Kyauk-myet-hmow-Zedi-gyi (No. 1158), south of Myinkaba, Coordinates– N: 44.265, E: 5.860. Its Plan has squire central shrine, 2.25 x 2.32 m. Vestibule and porch on north face, Niches on east, south and west foreparts were found (Figure 2). At the upper part of this temple, there are three terraces, the first square terrace with corner stupas, the second square terrace with two projections and corner stupas and the third square terrace with two projections. The square tower is top of the third square terrace and upper part of square tower is destroyed. Temple No. 1152 is constructed with the use of brick masonry, average brick has 35x18.5x4 cm. Cloister vault is used over the shrine. Barrel vaults are used over the vestibule and porch. In the exterior of temple, stucco mouldings were found such as ornate cornice and pediments, friezes with triangles, pilasters, urn-profiled base and tasselled frieze with pointed obovals on north foreparts.

The interior decoration of this small temple consisted of wall paintings or mural paintings. It covered almost entirely the ceiling vaults and all of the interior walls. Shrine, under vault, is decorated with lotus rosace, corner bands and tangent circle pattern with figures. On walls, this was painted frieze with pointed obovals, dummy pediments, and the illustrated scenes of Buddha's life, Mara's army and figures. In shrine; West wall, North side, detail from East, (the birth of Buddha) painting, Shrine, East wall, southeast corner, detail from west, shrine south wall, south east corner, detail from north, (Mara’s army and figures) paintings. Shrine, west wall, south side, detail from east (Mara’s army and figures ran away from Buddha) paintings. Temple No. 1152 has full of paintings depicts Buddha life stories. Among the scenes of Buddha’s life, (Mara’s army and figures) paintings are the most wonderful Buddhist Painting of that small temple. According to the art and Architectural style of this temple, it was constructed in the 13th century A.D, late Bagan period.

The interior decoration of Bagan temples were consisted of wall paintings. It covered almost entirely the ceiling vaults and all of the interior walls. Painted designs were performed as a framework of architectural mouldings. Temple No. 1152 has full of wonderful paintings which depicts Buddha life stories. As far as we can study, this temple was the best and completeness on the subject of Buddha life stories, and we can see original paintings of late Bagan Period. Thus, this temple has full of historical and artistic importance for scholars and researchers.

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Temple No. 1152 has vestibule and central shrine facing to the North and at the southern part of the central shrine there was Buddha statue and lotus throne— the statue was renovated, we can see original art works on the elbow and paintings behind the head of the Buddha and at the reredos (Figure 3). In most temples of Bagan period, at the both sides of the egg shape Yaunghlan or hollow ring paintings on male and female kainari or hintha birds biting flower at the mouths can be seen. Bodhi tree was drawn in the Yaunghlan only. According to the lines of the paintings we can trace the original art works designs on Bodhi tree in Yaunghlan, artists drew snakes as Bodhi tree leaves.

Figure 1. Temple No. 1152
Figure 2. Site plan of Temple No. 1152
Figure 3. Buddha Statue and lotus throne
(Pierre Pichard, Inventory of Monuments at Pagan, Vol. 5, 26-27)

South of Central Shrine Inner Wall

There were snakes coiling in the corner pediments of the egg shape Yaunghlan. At the back of the statute there were three flower garlands— one lattice fence and two lotus buds figures; there were snake heads in both figures. Snakes figures at the right side of the Buddha statute were in the direction towards the statute— the snakes were drawn as symbolic figure as they obeyed the command of Mara (evil nat) to attack Buddha. At the left side of the statute the snakes heads were turned towards opposite direction— the snakes makes no harm to Buddha and runs away to the farthest place; Lord Buddha was drawn in Bumiphatha mudra, thus its indicates Buddha succeeded the evil nat and attained enlightenment on the golden throne under the Bodhi Tree.

At the outer part of the flowers wrath with snakes there were figures on evil nat and his follower nats riding on various kinds of vehicles. Figures of monkey with snakes on the duck shoulder (Figure 6), a man on the buffalo shoulder (Figure 6), evil nat riding zebra (Figure 5), evil nat with rabbit head and human body riding a bird (Figure 5), evil nat with elephant trunk, fox's head and human body sitting on peacock's shoulder (Figure 5), evil nat with rabbit head and human body riding deer (Figure 5), a creature riding pig (Figure 4), a man on buffalo shoulder (Figure 4), and a evil nat- ogre opening his mouth wide open (Figure 4); all those various kinds of evil nats holding snakes in their right hands and ready to attack Lord Buddha resides on the throne under the Bodhi tree paintings were very impressive. The creatures which can't see in this world were creative imagination of the artists.
Mara's army and his followers ran away from Buddha (central shrine, south face, east site)

Figure 4. Depicted a creature riding pig; and a man on buffalo shoulder

Figure 5. Evil nat riding zebra; evil nat with rabbit head and human body riding a bird; evil nat with elephant trunk, fox's head and human body sitting on peacock's shoulder; and evil nat with rabbit head and human body riding deer

Figure 6. Monkey with snakes on the duck shoulder; a man on the buffalo shoulder

On the white horse body and elephant head creature there was a snake consists of human body with goat head and duck snout, human head and duck head; evil nat was holding a snake's head, and there was a figure of white snake head on elephant head, and a snake head was drawn at the chest of an evil nat with three heads. The elephant trunks hold the snake's heads also. At the horse's buttocks there was a drawing about body armour, the horse tails becomes snake's heads, the horse front and back legs becomes horse's body and two horse's hoofs becomes snake's heads. The horse's four legs have become ogre's arms.

The artist drawn the figure of the front horse hoof as snake's head and then another snake appears as circular shape floral design, and in the circular shape snake a small parrot sleeping in face up position, on the parrot figure there was hen's head, hen was in standing position. The figure of the hen was drawn at the snake's head and body, and the parrot's head was in the hen's neck; the parrot's wings become ogre's heads, and under the small ogre there were two huge ogres. Medium size ogre was standing on the huge ogre's shoulder, and on that medium size ogre there was a small ogre's stands on (Figure 4).

Those evil nats were drawn at south of central shrine inner wall western part, left side of the Buddha Statue – they prepare to attack Buddha, and at south of central shrine inner wall eastern part, right side of Buddha statue they defeated and ran away from Buddha, those paintings were not clearly seen in present day, therefore it could be presented here the defeated evil nats figures only.
**East Side of the Inner Wall of Central Shrine**

At the centre of the east side of the inner wall of central shrine, there was a pointed Nish, in the Nish there was a standing Buddha, and two arahats standing at the both sides of the Buddha and they were praying to the Buddha and on the air sages were flying in the sky and carrying snakes in their hands— the sages has moustaches and knotted his hairs tightly and wears short sarong and a snake coils up the egg shape Yaung Hlang on his head; and lotus flowers encircling around the sage was coiled by snakes (Figure 7). That snakes crawled and coiled around the sage’s throat, waist, feet and at the chest the figure on the sage seizing the snake’s head and praying the Buddha; from the foot of the sage’s foot there were clouds and nine snakes were lifting the sage’s body (Figure 8). The snake’s body was akin to the sage’s sarong dresses, it was an artist creative imagination to think snake’s body and sage’s body were the same.

![Figure 7. Paintings from East side of the inner wall of central Shrine.](image1)

![Figure 8. Painting of sage figure](image2)

The painting has bind with floral frame— the same pattern of the Nish, on the floral frame there were figures on twisted small snakes, and the small snakes crawls upwards to the Nish. At the top of floral frame was painting of Buddha preaching Dhamacekkra, and at the right and left Arahats were praying their master Buddha; each Arahats figure was painted in the floral design and the snake divided the Arahats one after another (Figure 9). At the left corner of the floral frame was consisted of Arahat figure, and on the southern side of the east walls of the central shrine has a painting on the subject on evil nats riding on the white elephant and attacks Lord Buddha (Figure 9); and on the left side or east of the central shrine northern walls has paintings on one flying nats and some episodes on Buddha Birth stories; at the southern walls painting an evil nats riding on the mysterious vehicles, the snakes wrapping on the nats and the nats holding snake's as well as arms in their hands (Figure 10). The lower part of the painting was damaged.
Figure 9. Paintings Buddha preaching Dhamacekkra
Southern side of the east walls of the central shrine

Figure 10. Northern side of the east walls of the central Shrine

The figures about warrior riding on the creature, snake's head in his hand and another nat warrior– human body with deer horn was riding on the ugly pig; that warrior holds snake's heads in his hand (Figure 11). The snake which wraps the evil nat warrior's horn encircled the duck's body, which was a vehicle of the evil nat's warrior. An evil warrior with deer head and human body has been wrapped by snakes and the evil nat holds tightly snake head in his hand and marching towards to attack Lord Buddha. Upon the figure of the evil nat there was a painting on white snake riding on the tiger, an evil nat warrior sitting on the tiger was holding a snake in his hand, the white snake has becomes frame of the painting. The snake has been lifted up by five evil nats; the nats figures were different from one after another– an ape like nat, human head snake body nat, goat horn and human body nat, female nat with snakes on the body was holding snake in her hand, and a male nat holding white snake in his hand; his body was wrapped by snakes and looking backwards. On the top evil nat leader riding the white elephant and his followers marching along behind the elephant and on the top of the head of the evil nat there were small, medium and large size ogre's heads and elephant's head were decorated by snakes, therefore its look likes magai. On the top of those figures we can seen the paintings on a creature with fox head riding on the elephant; and the ogre's head like snake biting small snakes in his mouth– the snakes were look likes a forehead band of the elephant. A female snake on her body; an elephant keeper rides behind the elephant's right ear, five snakes heads were crowned on his head, snakes wrapped in his waist and hold snakes in his hand. Behind the elephant keeper an evil nat's tramping the snake's body with his feet, and put his two legs one upon another; and he puts his left hand on the elephant's keeper shoulder. The snake was winding his right hand and snake's head on his left palm. Behind an evil nat elephant a man binding with snakes sits with one's haunches resting on the heels and the knees touching to the elephant's shoulder, and that person holding an umbrella in his to cover an evil nat from sun rays; there were snake heads in his hand and umbrella looks alike a crawling snake.

Three ropes appeared from three caparisons of the elephant's back, and one rope from elephant's belly– the robes and caparisons look like snakes; and those snakes were pulled up and lifted up by female evil nats ,evil nats with galon head and human body, and ogre head with bird body. Evil nat warriors marching forward at the fore front of the evil nat king, behind the warriors a man was sitting on the back of goat horn with white cow body creature, holding a snake in his hand; and evil nat warriors followed behind the evil king (Figure 9).
Northern Side of the East Interior Wall of Central Shrine

At the Northern side of the East interior wall of the central shrine there were paintings based on Buddha birth stories and king of evil nat follower flying nat; the flying evil nat was lifted up on the cloud by snakes, a duck, three small birds, a mythical bird with a proboscis, a horse head, the nat holding an umbrella with five tier and his hand chains, waist chains and bracelets were painted by snakes. The ear ring and maggai of the nat has snake figures. The nat wears stocking and the environs around the nat has full of flowers and the snakes figures were drawn in the floral designs (Figure 10). In addition, there were paintings about Buddha descends from Tavataintha abode, preaching Dhammacakra to his five disciples, birth of Buddha (Nativity seen), four nats offers gold up and fresh water to cleanse the face of Buddha.

Central shrine of the east wall was painted on the subject of Mara (evil nat) and other human figures. West wall of Central shrine has also painted about the figures on Mara and other figures running away from the Buddha, and at the central shrine North side of west wall, paintings on evil nats warriors riding on their extraordinary vehicles and run away to the opposite direction. The nat's warrior's figures were not the same, a nat with bird's head with human body was holding a sword and riding on a bird, running warrior nat with goat's head and human body, a nat crowned the snakes on his head has galone bird and human body was riding on the peacock's back and holding a sword in his hand, a warrior human being was riding on the pig's head has sword in his hand and snakes were circling around his body, a nat warrior full of snakes on the body holding a sword and shield in his hands was riding on the white hintha bird, a warrior nat with monkey's head and human body was riding a creature like a camel was holding dagger and snakes in both hands, a warrior riding on the snake biting a snake in his mouth, a human warrior holding deer horn and snakes running furiously, a human warrior with snakes on his body was riding on a galloping horse, a warrior crowned with snake's on his head was running on the ground, a warrior holding snakes in his hand was running on the ground with two feet, the evil nat warrior with three creatures heads— parrot head, human head and duck head was riding on the white horse's back and a evil nat warrior holding a snake head and human body figures were drawn in the paintings at the north side of the west wall. At the top of the warriors flying nat who was a follower of evil nat king closed
his umbrella and ran away in helter-skelter manner, a flying nat has been lifted up by the six ogre's head and snakes on the clouds; he took away the snakes along with him.

**At the South side, West wall of the central shrine**

At the South side West wall of the central shrine there were paintings on Mara- an evil nat king riding on the Mekhla elephant, evil nat warrior wrapping snakes in his body was riding on the fox's back, a human warrior standing on the bird's back—his whole body was covered by snakes- holding a sword likes saw's teeth in one hand, a human warrior standing on the galone bird’s shoulder, crowned the snakes on his head and snakes were circling around his body, holding a spear in his hand, human warrior standing on the bird, his hold body was wrapped by snakes, holding the snake in one hand and bow and arrows in other hand, a human warrior riding on the deer has been wrapped by snakes on his throat and arms was running to escape from danger and he holds snakes and arms in his hands. At the top of this figures there was a figure of a nat wearing a maggai on his head riding on the lion back and his body was wrapped by snakes has been running wildly and he held various kind of arms in his two hands, behind him follows a human body with elephant's trunk on the fox's head holding a sword in his hand and a warrior with snake's crown were running wildly posture; on the top an evil king of nat –Mara riding on the Giri Maykhla elephant and his followers were also running to escape from the death. Under the Nish there was a standing Buddha image- the paintings depicts on Buddha having succeed on Nalagiri elephant, preaching Dhamma Cekkra and taking recluse to the Paleya forest and resides at the forest monsoon three months. This painting in this temple was portraying on the stories about Buddha having attainment his enlightenment at Maha Bodhi tree and golden throne.

![Figure13. Mara (king of evil nat) riding on Mekhla elephant](image)

**Discussion**

Among the Buddhist paintings of Bagan, the stories about Buddha having attainment his englightenment at Maha Bodhi tree and golden throne seen were found in some temples, such as Watkyi Inn Gyu Pyauk Kyi Temple, Ngayon temple, Winido temple and Nandamanya temple etc. At the Watkyi Inn Gyu Pyauk Kyi Temple there was a paintings painted on late 12 century AD. The painting about Buddha having succeeded upon the evil nat and attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree painting which existed on the top of the reredos of the north of the statute was the finest of all. Behind the statute, top of the reredos was a picture of Bodhi tree, and at the right of the statute paintings on evil nat making war upon Buddha and on the left there was a painting on evil nat losing the war, evil nat sits on the elephant and commands his nat army to attack; and they lost the war and run away. At the West wall of
Winido Temple, Mara army attack and ran away from Buddha Painting was also found. At the east part of the central shrine of the Nandamanaya temple paintings on daughters of evil nat enticing the Buddha with lustful appearances and at the west walls evil nat stands on the chariot draw by makara and plays his bow and arrow to kill the Buddha. Temple No 1152 has full of paintings depicts Buddha life stories. Among the seen of Buddha’s life, Mara’s Army and figures paintings are the most wonderful Buddhist painting of that one and only of the small temple. According to the Art and Architectural style of this temple, it was constructed at 13th Century A.D., late Bagan period.

**Conclusion**

Theravada Buddhism has been widely influenced on people of Bagan and the artists as well as ordinary people beliefs that in this samsara, he can receive good results if he fulfils good deeds in present life. The artists created paintings on Buddha life stories and Jataka tales in different forms and patterns but they never failed to present the main theme of Buddhist philosophy. They create art works with their inner most feelings and intellect not only to propagate Buddhism as a didactic level but also artistic level to express their emotions and feelings.

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Field work